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## THE WISDOM OF CATWG.

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THE SEVEN QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY CATWG THE WISE TO SEVEN WISE MEN \* IN HIS COLLEGE AT LLANFEITHIN, WITH THEIR ANSWERS †.

I. What constitutes supreme goodness in a man? Equity : *Answered by TALHAIARN THE BARD.*

II. What shews transcendent wisdom in a man? To refrain from injuring another when he has the ability : *by ST. TEILO.*

III. What is the most headstrong vice in a man? Incontinence : *by ARAWN, SON OF CYNFARCH.*

IV. Who is the poorest man? He who has not resolution to take of his own : *by TALIESIN, CHIEF OF BARDS.*

V. Who is the richest man? He who coveteth nothing belonging to another : *by GILDAS OF THE GOLDEN GROVE.*

VI. What is the fairest quality in a man? Sincerity : *by CYNAN, SON OF CLYDNO EIDDIN.*

VII. What is the greatest folly in a man? The wish to injure another without having the power to effect it : *by YSTYFFAN THE BARD OF TEILO.*

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## WELSH MUSIC.—No. II.

*To the EDITOR of the CAMBRO-BRITON.*

SIR,—It is much easier to describe a picture or a poem than a musical composition. Very explicit illustrations may be given of a painting, and extracts may be quoted from a poem ; but in music it requires either vocal or instrumental *tones* to give a proper idea of its good or bad qualities. Consequently, my endeavour to describe, in writing, the characteristic beauties of the Welsh Melodies, will fall far short of the specimens given on the harp or piano-forte.

\* The persons, here called " wise men," were not merely scholars, but associates, most of whom had taken refuge in Catwg's College after the loss of their territory in the wars consequent on the incursions of the Saxons. A brief account of Catwg, who lived in the sixth century, was given in the Life of Taliesin, in the First Number. His Aphorisms occupy about a hundred pages in the Welsh Archaeology, and will be occasionally translated under the title above adopted. The Seven Answers, here given, will, no doubt, remind the classical reader of the apothegms of the Seven Sages of Greece : nor will they suffer in the comparison.—ED.

† Arch. of Wales, vol. iii. p. 38.

"To those, who are in possession of "A Selection of Welsh Melodies with English Words," it will be gratifying, perhaps, if I notice the airs, as they occur in that publication.

"*Of a noble Race was Shenkin*" is a bold, energetic composition, and is one of those characteristic tunes which even a person, totally unacquainted with music, cannot hear without being forcibly struck with it. The harpers in Wales generally play it in *E minor*, which is too high for ordinary voices. Mr. E. Jones, in his excellent collection of Welsh Airs, has given it in *c minor*, which is certainly better.

It will not, I trust, be considered an improper digression, if I endeavour to explain what is meant by a *minor key*, particularly as I shall be under the necessity of mentioning it often, in the course of my correspondence. Of course I do not address those, who are adepts in the science of music.

In *minor* keys, the *third* above the tonic, or key note, is *flat*; *i. e.* only three semitones higher.—In *major* keys, the third above the key note is *sharp*, or *four* semitones higher. Let us suppose *E* to be the key note; if the key be *minor*, the *G* (a third above) will not be sharp, as it necessarily must be, if the key be *major*. Some of the most beautiful of the Welsh, Scotch, and Irish airs are in *minor* keys. There is something soothing and pleasing in the *minor* mode. As a proof of its effects on the human heart, I have only to mention, that, let a person be in trouble, or labouring under severe distress of mind, if he seek consolation in singing divine songs, (which is frequently the case) he will invariably choose those in *minor* keys. Kent's beautiful anthem of "*Hear my prayer, O Lord*," is in *E minor*.

To my countrymen, who are unacquainted with the science of music, it may be necessary to say, that "*Morfa Rhuddlan*," and "*Dafydd y Garreg Wen* \*," are in *minor* keys, and I appeal to their own feelings, whether, when they hear these plaintive melodies well performed, they do not experience a most pleasing, soothing sensation, and whether a tearful eye will not often bespeak a heart rapt in ecstasy †?

\* Although these airs, as well as the celebrated one previously noticed, commence and finish in the *minor* mode,—the melodies modulate into the relative *major*, in the second parts, which heightens the effect considerably.—J. P.

† It may here be noticed, that Dr. Crotch, in his excellent Lectures on Music, always eulogizes the antient British airs, and performs many of them in a masterly manner.—J. P.

The *bass* of the air, under my present consideration, is very grand and striking; and, when performed, either in an orchestra, or on the harp, or piano-forte, must afford great delight. It is not so easy to execute it on the Welsh, as it is on the pedal, harp. The Welsh harp having three rows of strings, (the middle one being the semitones,) the performer is obliged to put his finger between two of the outer strings, when a casual sharp or flat occurs\*; whereas on the pedal harp the foot accomplishes it. By pressing a pedal the note required becomes half a tone higher, and by unfixing, it is rendered a semitone lower. This is evidently an improvement; but still the Welsh harp, exclusively of its venerable and unadorned appearance, has many advantages, particularly in passages which run in unison; and these occur continually in variations on the different airs.

I shall be able, I hope, to notice several of the Melodies in my next; also to specify to which of them the beautiful *Pennillion*, which may appear, from time to time, in the CAMBRO-BRITON, are sung.

I shall conclude this article with the words of the late Rev. G. H. Glasse.—“Whenever,” said he, in a conversation I had with him on the beauties of the Welsh airs, “I hear that masterly composition, ‘*Of a noble Race was Shenkin,*’ my soul “takes a flight amid the rocky wilds of Cambria, where,

“ With lays of romantic story  
The halls of our Sires resounded;  
At the call of love or glory,  
O’er their native hills they bounded.

“ Released from martial duty,  
They return’d to their peaceful pleasures;  
And then, at the feet of beauty,  
They woo’d in melting measures:  
To the wand’ring poor,  
Wide ope’d their door,  
And freely dispersed their treasures.”

Sept. 6, 1819.

JOHN PARRY.

\* The Harp has been always esteemed the principal musical instrument among the Welsh. Antiently it was strung with hair, which continued in use until the commencement of the fifteenth century. Until that period also it had only a single row of strings; but the performer was able to produce a flat or sharp by a peculiar management of the finger and thumb, an artifice, it is believed, no longer known.—ED.